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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
HAITI EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE
USAID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
WHA ROBERTA JOCOBSON
NSC DAN RESTREPO
WHA/MEX ALEX LEE
WHA/CAR V DE PIRRO
IO/UNP B NARANJO
IO/UNP M GARUCKIS

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SUBJECT: MEXICO CONTINUES ITS HAITI RELIEF EFFORT

REF: 10 MEXICO 274

¶1. (SBU) Summary: While Mexico is engaging on an unprecedented scale in contributing to the international relief effort in Haiti, capacity and ideological restraints have hampered some of its contributions and continue to complicate Mexico's active participation in MINUSTAH. This could be on the verge of changing: we understand that President Calderon is considering an official recommendation from Foreign Secretary Espinoza that Mexico contribute federal police forces (SSP) to MINUSTAH. We have used our engagement networks with Mexico on Merida to support Mexico's relief efforts and to encourage the GOM to participate more actively in the UN's operation in Haiti. Continued expressions of support by senior USG officials for Mexico's nascent foray into UN humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) missions and peace keeping operations (PKO) are encouraged. End Summary

Mexico's Immediate Response

¶2. (U) The Mexican public's tremendous outpouring of support for relief efforts in Haiti encouraged the government to move quickly and decisively in support of the relief operation (Reftel A). As soon as it was possible to land in Port-au-Prince, Mexico sent medical and rescue teams, engineers and logistics officers. In partnership with a host of other international workers in these areas, over 200 Mexicans engaged in Haiti in the first days of the crisis. The United Nations assigned the Topos (Moles), Mexican rescue crews founded in 1985 after Mexico's devastating quake, to sectors 8 and 9 in Port a Prince, where they rescued 16 people. Another Mexican team also helped the President of Haiti recover sensitive documents and equipment.

¶3. (U) GOM immigration authorities moved to adapt eligibility criteria to benefit Haitian nationals with links to Mexico. All undocumented Haitian citizens already in Mexico will receive non-immigrant/visitor status on humanitarian grounds, enabling them to reside and work legally in Mexico. In addition, residents of Mexico will be able to sponsor the arrival of Haitian immigrants to whom they have pre-existing personal links by proving their ability to provide them with short-term financial support.

¶4. (U) As a response to the UN's first Flash Appeal, the GOM announced the donation of 8 million USD and the implementation of the bilateral cooperation fund, which was first announced in 2009, but now is being used as a mechanism to provide additional monetary support to Haiti. The GOM has announced that it is looking at ways to match Mexican expertise to specific needs in Haiti. The incorporation of Mexican civil society and the private sector will prove integral to efforts to assist Haiti in building housing and schools, developing temporary employment programs, and commencing reforestation.

Civilian Response

¶5. (U) The response to the GOM's call to the Mexican public for donations has been unprecedented. The Mexican Red Cross established over 486 centers for receiving aid across Mexico's 32 states and received over 10,000 tons of supplies including between 250 and 300 tons of drinking water, medicines, tinned food, rice, beans, mattresses, toilet paper rolls, and diapers within the first 10 days. Of these, over 4,000 tons have already been distributed in Haiti through the Haitian Government and numerous NGOs.

Military Response - Some Operational Restraints

¶6. (U) The Mexican Navy (SEMAR) deployed a total of five ships to support the relief effort. One to two ships are off the coast of Haiti, at any given time, off-loading supplies. To date, the Mexican ship "Huasteco" has transported 400 tons of supplies; the "Tarasco" has transported 800 tons; the "Papaloapan" has transported 1700 tons; the "Usumacinta" has transported 1700 tons; and the "Zapoteco" has transported 200 tons. Because the supplies aboard the SEMAR vessels are not consistent in weight or size, they must be transferred to the USS GUNSTON HALL so that they can be palletized for final transport to shore aboard U.S. landing craft.

¶7. (U) The on-station SEMAR vessel has also served as the berthing platform for several of the Mexican medical teams. SEMAR, however, has proven reliant on small watercraft supplied by the USS GUNSTON HALL to transport these teams, daily, to Port Killick. Alongside Joint Task Force Bravo medical personnel and U.S. Navy corpsmen, the Mexican team has treated over 2,000 patients. ADM Murphy of U.S. Fleet Forces Command described the facilities and level of care provided at Port Killick as now surpassing pre-quake levels. As a result, the Mexican Medical teams have now moved to HCBC,B4pital SacrcBC,B) Coeur, where they continue to provide care.

¶8. (U) At the onset of the crisis, the Mexican Army (SEDENA) announced the donation of a field kitchen with the capacity of serving 5,000 to 7,000 meals daily. The U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Coordination and U.S. Transportation Command dedicated numerous man-hours assisting SEDENA in organizing the transport of the field kitchen. After four weeks of logistical work, the field kitchen was flown to the U.S. and shipped via a contracted company to Haiti. The large Mexican Army field kitchen has begun to distribute prepared, hot meals at the town of Carrefour. More recently, SRE informed us that the SEMAR would send two smaller kitchens and sought U.S. assistance for food procurement and sustainment. We have stressed to SRE the need for "self-sustaining" recovery assistance and directed them to the U.N. and World Food Program to coordinate supplies of ingredients for their kitchens.

Possible Police Contribution for MINUSTAH

¶9. (U) As a member of the UN Security Council, the GOM initially sought an unproductive debate on reviewing MINUSTAH's mandate, which was avoided. Subsequently, Mexico has supported MINUSTAH's extension and worked actively to ensure that the MINUSTAH mandate responds to the needs and interests of the Haitian people. We have encouraged the GOM to consider sending a formed police unit as a part of MINUSTAH to tackle the problems of gang violence, kidnapping, and looting. Historically, Mexico's participation in UN peacekeeping has been a complete non-starter, fraught with political controversy surrounding Mexico's traditional policy of non-intervention, a sacred cow in Mexico's modern foreign policy. While Mexico did send police units to the UN's Mission in El Salvador, the peacekeeping polemic has kept Mexico from making a similar contribution in MINUSTAH.

¶10. (SBU) The SRE has been actively working to build support for a Mexican police contribution to MINUSTAH since the earthquake. Deputy Director General for Security Council Affairs Fernando

Gonzalez Saiffe reviewed his active efforts in support of a Mexican police contribution to MINUSTAH: he has briefed Mexican agencies that could potentially have a say on or a role in a Mexican peacekeeping contingent - Federal Police (SSP), the Army (SEDENA) and the Navy (SEMAR); he has briefed the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Chamber of Deputies several times; and he has lobbied the President's Foreign Affairs Advisor, Rafael Fernandez de Castro (who reportedly is supportive). Furthermore, he expects that the Mexican Senate will adapt a "punto de acuerdo", which is a resolution in support of a Mexican police contribution. The Ambassador has also raised the issue with Fernandez de Castro and with SRE Undersecretary Julian Ventura.

Comment

¶11. (SBU) As the world was moved by devastation of the earthquake in Haiti, Mexico was no exception. Historically committed to the principle of non-intervention, the GOM has signaled a tentative readiness to engage with the region in ways not previously contemplated, prodded in large measure by its own citizenry. Even as its engagement on Haiti has revealed clear gaps in Mexico's ability to rapidly deploy resources, the GOM remains committed to the effort. Given its potential, we have used this occasion to speak with various GOM agencies (SRE, SEDENA, SEMAR and Proteccion Civil) and encourage efforts that push the entire GOM into a larger role on the regional stage. Merida cooperation has served as a foundation to press Mexico more assertively than in the past to adopt a more modern and engaged posture. While Mexico's engagement on Haiti does not presage the final nail in the coffin of non-intervention, we are observing dawning recognition that in a globalized world, where climate change, infectious diseases, organized crime, and the economic life blood of commerce all imply transborder flows, the old shibboleths of sovereignty no longer apply.
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